

August 31 the 30th division attacked the German Line, in conjunction with the 30th British division (on its left), and the 27th U. S. division, New York National Guard troops (on its right) and captured all its objectives, advanced 1,500 yards, took 15 prisoners, two machine-guns and 35 rifles, these belonging to the 236th German division. This was the first offensive and the 30th "made good". September 4th it was transferred to the British general headquarters reserve, at Roellecourt, France, and there it was trained to attack in conjunction with British "tanks". September 17th it was moved further south, to Herissart and September 22nd to the British Fourth Army at Bois de Buire, near Tricourt taking over a front line sector which the 1st Australian division had been holding.

The 30th division attacked September 29th the famous "Hindenburg Line", which that German leader said "could not be taken". In this assault the 46th British division was on the right, the 27th U. S. division on the left of the 30th. This line was thought by the Germans to be "untakable" because it curved in front of the St. Quentin tunnel; had three main trench systems, protected by vast fields of very heavy barbed wire entanglements, skillfully placed, this wire having been damaged but little by the artillery fire of the Allies; the higher ground occupied by the Germans gave them a devastating machine-gun fire on all approaches; their lines had many concrete emplacements for machine-guns and a great number of "dug-outs" lined with wooden timbers like those used in mines, with wooden steps leading down 30 feet under the ground level to small rooms, each holding half a dozen men and wired for electric lights.

The big tunnel through which the canal passed under the little mountains was big enough to hold 20,000 men and it was lighted electrically and filled with flat boats. Numerous smaller tunnels connected this big one with the Hindenburg trench system and one of these ran from the main tunnel straight to the basement of a large stone building which was German headquarters. Yet other tunnels ran to the city of Bellicourt and other places, so this strange and almost unearthly subterranean system, With its carefully hidden entrances and exits, unknown of course to the Allies, made a wonderfully complete and safe underground way of communicating and sending reinforcements to any threatened point on all that German sector.

Very early in the morning of September 29th the 60th brigade, with some units of the 117th regiment, assaulted this terrible line on a front of 3,000 yards, captured the whole Hindenburg system, then advanced still further and took the tunnel system with all the German troops hidden in it and next captured the towns of Bellicourt, Nouroy, Riqueval, Carriere, Etricourt, the Guillaime Ferme (farm) and Ferme de Riqueval; in this part of the assault advancing 4,200 yards and defeating two German divisions of average quality and taking from these (the 75th and 185th) 47 officers and 1,434 men.

October 8th the 30th by another big drive and in four days advanced 17,500 yards, captured 20 strategic points, 45 officers and 1,889 men, from 14 German divisions, some of them crack troops. Then the 30th was relieved by the 27th division, but October 16th it was back again on the front line and beat three German divisions, advanced 9,000 yards and captured 6 officers, and 412 men, also five towns and a fortified farm. The country is very rough there, the large towns offered special opportunities for machine-gun defence and of this fact the Germans took every advantage. Yet the advance kept up, often without artillery support, and was made possible only by the absolute determination of the troops and the skillful use of all arms of the service combined. The advance could not be stopped, and the German naval division was decimated when it was hastily thrown in to attempt to check the onrush of the victorious Americans.

The division was withdrawn to the Heilly Training Area, near Amiens, to allow replacements to fill the gaps, numerous indeed, in the ranks, and for a well-earned rest, and two weeks later, November 11th, the armistice was signed. The fighting having thus ended the 30th was released from the British Expeditionary Force with which it had been associated since its arrival in France, and transferred to the American Expeditionary Force, in the Le Mans area, with division headquarters at Ballou, November 21.

During the heavy fighting and the advances described the push was so fast and the troops so quickly withdrawn after their victories that there was no chance to gather and save the great amount of supplies and guns captured; this part of the business being therefore left to the salvage troops of the British Fourth Army. It is, however, known that the 30th took at least 72 field artillery cannon, 26 trench mortars, 426 machine-guns